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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editors are not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer to insure publication.

THE NIGHTINGALE SCHOOL

DEAR EDITOR: While Miss Maxwell was the guest of Dr. Hamilton at Bagatelle, this autumn, she visited the hospital in the Rue Cassagnol. The nurses gave her an impromptu reception and offered her a little souvenir. Mademoiselle Rossignol, a probationer, made the enclosed address in French. I have translated it, as I thought you might like to publish it in the JOURNAL. I am also enclosing the Rev. Robert Davis' oration, delivered at the laying of the foundation stone of the American Nurses' Memorial in June, in case you have not received a copy of it. It was such a remarkably fine and impressive oration that it well merits publishing.¹ Last week I was out at Bagatelle for a few moments and was agreeably surprised to find the outside of the Memorial nearing completion. Dr. Hamilton says the architect has promised to get the roof on before the proverbial rainy winter months set in. In that way the building will be ready at the date the architect agreed upon.

Bordeaux, France

GERTRUDE CLARK CILHAY, R.N.

"Miss Maxwell: It is a great happiness for us all to receive you in our school and to express to you here our respectful affection. We feel ourselves attached to you, dear Miss Maxwell, not only by the affinities that bind people together who are working for the same principle, following the same ideal, but also by that solicitude, by that attachment which you have unceasingly manifested toward us. We cannot forget how greatly you helped and encouraged our beloved Directress when she undertook her tour of propaganda in America. If the dream of the New School at Bagatelle is becoming a reality, if the walls are rapidly rising in the park of that beautiful estate, it is in a large measure due to your far-reaching influence in helping our dear Dr. Hamilton who went over to you with the courage and self-abnegation that make of her life an apostolate. Our beautiful new school will constantly remind us of the noble and generous acts of that wonderfully altruistic country which is yours. During the autumn or winter evenings when we gather together in the library, we will find much to help us forget our day's fatigue, to improve our minds, by the books which the Nurses' Association of the Presbyterian Hospital of New York have given us in memory of Amabel Roberts, who died on the battlefield of France; we will read the books this heroine has read, the books her family so generously offered us. Believe us, Miss Maxwell, that we are quite overcome by the many marks of sympathy and appreciation which we owe to our beloved Directress and all those who have collaborated with her in building up the reputation of our school. We have come to harvest the fruit of her life work and we will endeavor to show ourselves worthy of so glorious a past."

DOES CHARITY WORK PAY?

DEAR EDITOR: Metropolitan, hourly, private duty, or charity work. Does it pay? Which would you drop? Hourly nursing, because of ignorance on the part of the doctors and the public as to its advantages, does not pay much, a few straggly cases. Private duty pays, but to carry on the other work, I have

¹ This address will be found in the Foreign Department.

to work nights on private cases and until noon, in town. Metropolitan work pays expenses. *Charity work pays.* Metropolitan cases that reach the limit of visits for that company develop into charity cases. When a person buys supplies for charity cases, not all they need either, they almost have to live on love and they don't have much time for that, but charity work pays in this way. One gets more satisfaction caring for one charity case than for a dozen others. If every nurse realized the good she could do if she would care for three charity cases a week on her own income, she would find herself sacrificing movies, fine clothes, pleasure trips, etc., for the benefit of some poor little colored baby or crippled aged person or tubercular family. The other day I had been at the hospital all night with a private patient, a mental case, that must be watched every minute. I went off duty at 7 a. m., went down to the room I call my home, didn't trust myself to look at my cot, changed to street uniform, and went to the Metropolitan office, got my new calls and proceeded to care for both new and old cases. At 1 p. m. I was through. I didn't stop down town for lunch, for I had a rousing headache and went up to my room, where three calls awaited me. The police matron was among them. I called her first and she said to come at once, so I called the other two and arranged for late afternoon calls or, if not, the next day, and went to help the police matron. Your heart would have bled at the pitiful case I found. A little sixteen-year-old girl with a sweet innocent face and bobbed hair, with a husky seven and a half pound baby boy (illegitimate). I gave them the necessary care, then took the police matron to the grandmother's, three miles into the country, to explain matters to her. The girl's father and mother were dead and she had lived with her grandmother, a lady well along in years. She had been sick herself, blood pressure 200; any nurse knows what that means. The girl wanted to keep the baby. Three days after it was born, she was taken to the grandmother's in an ambulance accompanied by the doctor. Both baby and mother stood the trip well. Well, the grandmother could not take care of them, so what was there to do? Only one thing. I had to do it myself. The girl could not give the baby the care or the home it should have, so she was persuaded to give it up, but where was it to go? I went to several Christian people who had no children and stated my case. Too much expense was the chief excuse. At last, at the end of five days, a woman of moderate circumstances who had had eight children of her own, four of whom had died, volunteered to take it. Her youngest living child was 12 years old. I went out and got little Dick, as his mother had named him, and soon he was in the arms of a loving, really Christian woman and I have not worried one minute since about his care. Today I went out to see the girl. She wants to enter training. I certainly will help her to develop into the noble woman training can make of her. The grandmother offered to pay me today. I certainly did not take it. My pay was in seeing the discouraged look leave that child-mother's face, and hope take its place, and to see little Dick in a real home, and to see the relief the grandmother seemed to feel. Does charity work pay? *It certainly does.* We public health, industrial, Metropolitan, private duty, hospital, tubercular, school, and all kinds of nurses run into charity work some time. Do it, and the reward will be greater than the effort. That is only one case. If you could see my little row of colored babies, my row of white babies, my cripples, my chronics, my tubercular cases, etc., you would not think I was foolish to carry on my work among the poor, but it is getting beyond me. I cannot provide for the cases as they should be, for the work is increasing, my income is not. I have appealed to my church. The result is a question yet. If their answer is "No," will I drop my charity work?

Not as long as I can keep it up! Don't think nurses are rich, because they are busy all the time. I have received more ridicule, sarcasm, slams, advice, and rebukes on profiteering! Such is the construction other nurses put upon my business. God knows, and I know, so why should I care?

Pennsylvania.

I. E. B.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

DEAR EDITOR: Regarding nurses and church: E. L. C. must be an extremely fortunate nurse if she can always have a patient who can be "fixed up" in time for Sunday School. Then, too, she is presuming when she says that "any organization that rejects Christ cannot prosper," for taken as a whole, there is no organization or class of people doing more to smooth the rough places or to alleviate suffering than the nurses. After I have spent a long night or day with some suffering human who is uncertain whether the end will be a return to life or a passing away, I would rather sit down in a quiet spot somewhere and read Drummond's "Greatest Thing in the World" than to go to Sunday School. Who would not? Not that I reject Christ,—far from it, for practical religion is summed up in "Love to God and service to man," and how better can we show our love than through our service? Let us then accord to every nurse the individual right to suit herself regarding her form of public worship. If E. L. C. can go to Sunday School, well enough, but where she can, there may be ten other nurses who will have to manifest their love to God in other service. We gain nothing by striving to have others live up to our standard; we do well if we live up to our own standard, granting to others the privilege of doing their duty as they see fit.

Tennessee

O. H. B.

ARMY NURSES ARE PRAISED IN THE HOUSE

DEAR EDITOR: Tribute to American Army nurses who served overseas was paid recently by Representative Jeffers, Democrat, Alabama, in the House. He said that "any one guilty of any statement in any way besmirching the records of the Army Nurse Corps overseas is simply ignorant of the caliber of women who served loyally in that splendid organization." Mr. Jeffers, who served in the American Army in France and was wounded, said "such baseness is worthy of the fiend incarnate himself."

A SUBSCRIBER.

ARE NURSES COMMERCIAL?

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DEAR EDITOR: In the December number of the *Pictorial Review* there appears an article by Miss Clara D. Noyes, president of the American Nurses' Association and director of the American Red Cross, in which the writer states, referring to "the new California nursing laws," that the nursing schools of California "are obliged by law to give their student nurses \$20.00 a month," this being due not "to the nursing laws, but to the functioning of a state minimum wage for women." As chairman of the legislative committee of the California State Nurses' Association, I would state that the nursing schools above referred to are not obliged by any law to pay any stated sum of money to the student nurses herein, such sum being within the control of the hospital and school